



Securing today  
and tomorrow

# Journey to Success: Employment Tools for Veterans with Disabilities

## Part 1: Social Security Programs for People with Disabilities



## Part 1: Working While Disabled, How We Can Help

Are you, or is someone you know, a United States military Veteran who acquired a disability during or after your service?

Military Veterans bring experience and skills of great value to the workforce. This document is part of a 5-part series called Journey to Success, which describes services that help Veterans with a disability enter the workforce and find fulfilling employment. Some of the services are open only to Veterans, but many of them are available to any American with a disability. You can find other information in this series, as well as a comprehensive document including all five parts, on our website at [ssa.gov/people/veterans/](https://ssa.gov/people/veterans/).

### SOCIAL SECURITY'S DISABILITY PAYMENTS

Many Veterans with severe disabilities do not realize that they may be able to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If you are unable to perform substantial work because of your disability, you may wish to apply for benefits. To apply, you may contact **1-800-772-1213** to request an appointment, or you may apply on our website at [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov).

For more information on programs and services Social Security provides to support Veterans and Wounded Warriors, visit our Veterans' page at [ssa.gov/people/veterans/](https://ssa.gov/people/veterans/).

If you already receive an SSDI or SSI benefit based on disability, Social Security offers additional programs for people receiving benefits who want to work.

### SOCIAL SECURITY'S TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM

The Ticket to Work program is a free and voluntary program available to people ages 18 through 64 who have a disability and who receive SSDI or SSI benefits. Under this program, beneficiaries are entitled to participate by signing up with an approved service provider. This can be a state vocational rehabilitation agency, or an Employment Network (EN). An EN is an organization that holds an agreement with Social Security to provide services to people receiving SSDI or SSI benefits to help them gain or increase employment. The program is voluntary, both for the EN and for the person receiving benefits. When you contact the EN, they will assess their ability to serve you, and may elect to "assign" the Ticket to their EN. If they accept the Ticket assignment, they will coordinate and provide the services you and the EN agree will help you meet your work goals. These services may be training, career counseling, vocational rehabilitation, job placement, and ongoing support services necessary to achieve your career objectives. For more information, visit us at [choosework.ssa.gov/](https://choosework.ssa.gov/).

## SOCIAL SECURITY WORK INCENTIVES

Special rules make it possible for people receiving SSDI or SSI benefits to work and still receive monthly payments.

And, if you can't continue working because of your medical condition, your benefits can start again — you may not have to file a new application.

Work incentives include:

- Continued cash benefits for a time while you work;
- Continued Medicare or Medicaid while you work; and
- Help with education, training, and rehabilitation to start a new line of work.

For more information, see the following publications:

- “*Working While Disabled, How We Can Help*”: [ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf](https://ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf)
- “*Supplemental Security Spotlights*”: [ssa.gov/ssi.links-to-spotlights.htm](https://ssa.gov/ssi.links-to-spotlights.htm)
- “*If You’re Blind or Have Low Vision*”: [ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10052.pdf](https://ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10052.pdf)
- “*The Red Book – A Guide to Work Incentives*”: [ssa.gov/redbook](https://ssa.gov/redbook)

## PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT

A Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) is a plan for your future. A plan lets you use your income or other things you own to help you reach your work goals. For example, you could set aside money to go to school to get specialized training for a job or to start a business. The job that you want should allow you to earn enough to reduce or eliminate your need for benefits provided under both the Social Security and SSI programs. A plan is meant to help you get the items, services, or skills you need to reach your goals.

For more information about Plans for Achieving Self-Support, see *Working While Disabled – A Guide to Plans for Achieving Self-Support* at [ssa.gov/pubs/11017.pdf](https://ssa.gov/pubs/11017.pdf).

## WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

Social Security work incentive programs can be confusing. If you receive SSDI or SSI payments based on disability and you return to work, you may access a free service that provides counseling to help you understand the effect of work on your benefits. Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) talk to you about all of the benefits you receive. They verify your benefits to make sure they are giving accurate advice. The CWIC working with you then prepares a comprehensive report that outlines how your work will affect your benefits. This report outlines the information they shared with you. In some situations, WIPA CWICs will help you understand when and how to report your earnings to Social Security. WIPA works with people who are working or who are about to go to work, and provides free services across the United States.

The easiest way to find the WIPA in your area is to contact the Ticket to Work Help Line. Call us at **1-866-968-7842**, or if you're deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number at **1-866-833-2967**. We can answer your calls from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also find the WIPA serving your area by searching in the "Find Help" tool at [choosework.ssa.gov/](https://choosework.ssa.gov/).

## PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Each state and territory has a federally funded Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization that provides free legal services to help people with disabilities protect their rights. P&A programs receive funding from several federal agencies via grants designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Social Security funds one of the programs offered by P&A organizations, called Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security, or PABSS.

PABSS offers advocacy to help Social Security beneficiaries remove barriers to successful employment. You can search for the P&A program that serves your area using the link below, or you can call the Ticket to Work Help Line at **1-866-968-7842**, or at our TTY number, **1-866-833-2967**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

You can find a list of Protection and Advocacy organizations across the country from the National Disability Rights Network at [www.ndrn.org/en/ndrn-member/agencies/](https://www.ndrn.org/en/ndrn-member/agencies/).

## Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to conduct Social Security business from anywhere at any time, is to visit [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov). There, you can:

- Create a [my Social Security account](#) to review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, get a replacement 1099/1042S, and more;
- **Apply for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs;**
- **Apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits;**
- **Find copies of our publications;**
- **Get answers to frequently asked questions;** and
- So much more!

## CALL US

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

If you need to speak to a person, we can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.

## Thank You

Social Security thanks you for your service and sacrifice. We hope these resources are helpful to you on your employment adventure!



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